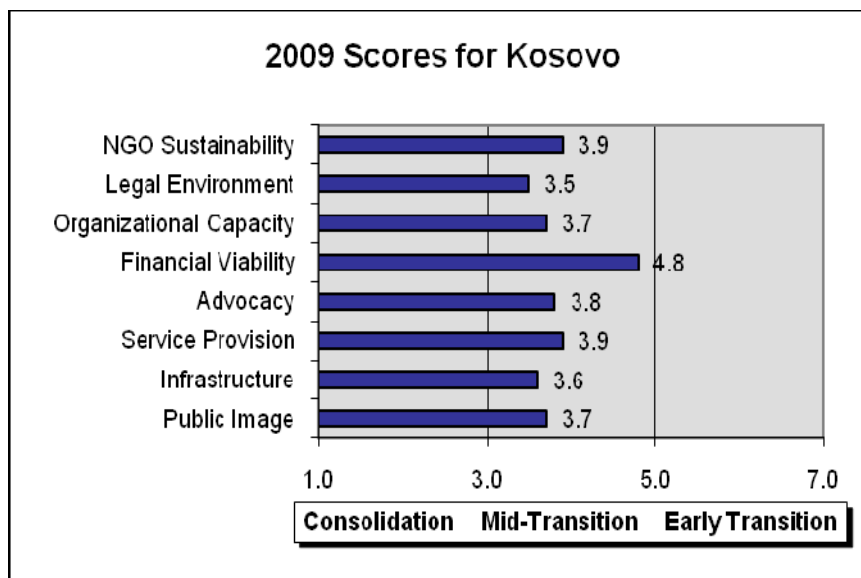


## KOSOVO



**Capital:** Pristina

**Polity:**  
Republic

**Population:**  
1,815,048 (July 2010 est.)

**GDP per capita (PPP):**  
\$2,500 (2007 est.)

### NGO SUSTAINABILITY: 3.9

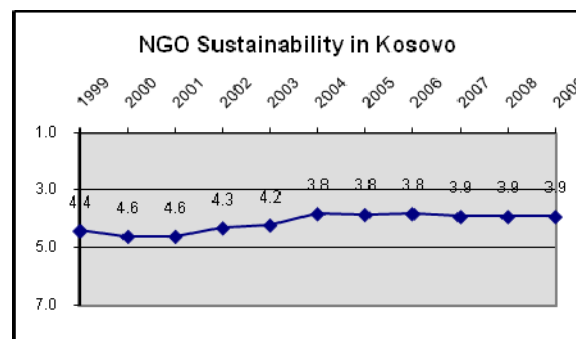
A year after the declaration of Kosovo's independence, the challenges facing the new country have begun emerging. NGOs played a vital role as watchdogs, protectors of the interests of different sectors of society, and providers of social services. During 2009, Kosovo's number of NGOs reached a total of approximately 5,000.

NGOs contributed to the difficult task of building a government in ways ranging from providing expertise to organizing protests and demonstrations. A series of NGO initiatives accompanied the policymaking process. NGOs engaged in protests, petitions, and civil disobedience strategies in reaction to the increase in electricity costs, the privatization of the Kosova C power plant, and a bill on meat imports. NGOs also monitored the local elections and the work of the Assembly of Kosovo and the government.

There is still confusion about the division of powers between UNMIK, the Kosovo government, and the new European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX). The latter has built a presence in the country and has been working with courts, police, and customs authorities. In

September, EULEX signed a controversial protocol on customs with Serbia, which NGOs harshly criticized.

A tough electoral campaign in Pristina shook up the current governing coalition made up of Prime Minister Thaci's Democratic Party (PDK) and President Sejdiu's Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK). PDK declared the coalition broken, but after a brief flirtation with business tycoon Behgjet Pacolli's New Kosovo Alliance (AKR), returned to the alliance with LDK.



The much-anticipated Law on NGOs passed on February 12, 2009. This piece of legislation is a milestone for the legal protection of NGOs and the formalization of relations between NGOs,

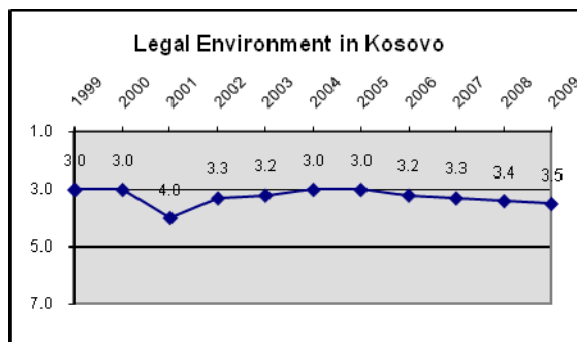
the government, and other actors. A consortium of NGOs gave their feedback on the law, which members of the assembly and NGO representatives debated at length. Civil society leaders assessed the law as one of the best NGO laws in the region.

A few coalitions between NGOs were created, all of them ad hoc and short term. The only formal NGO network in Kosovo, CiviKos, and the biggest NGO resource center, the Advocacy

Training and Resource Center (ATRC), reduced their activity this year, making information sharing among NGOs difficult. No visible improvements were made in deepening communication and cooperation between NGO representatives of different ethnic backgrounds or based in different regions. A handful of cooperative initiatives had a cross-ethnic character, but they were limited both in number and in impact.

### LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 3.5

The four-year downward trend in the legal environment continued. Despite the new NGO Law and fairly easy registration procedures, NGOs experienced difficulties in dealing with the administration.



Procedures for registering an NGO are easy, although not necessarily quick. NGOs complain of persistent problems with having their statutes approved or changed. The NGO Registration Office often returns statutes to NGOs for changes several times, which delays the overall process. The NGO Registration Office lacks flexibility and a constructive approach towards NGOs. Representatives of NGOs blame the lack of efficiency on the poorly prepared staff. Additionally, NGOs from outside Pristina incur unnecessary expenses due to the delays. Serbian NGOs, especially those based in the enclaves, have to travel back and forth several times in order to deal with Registration Office requests.

A major development in the legal environment was the adoption of the new NGO Law. The

Law on Freedom of Association in Non-Governmental Organizations was passed by the Assembly of Kosovo on February 12, and promulgated by presidential decree on March 6. NGOs continued to provide feedback until the day before the discussion of the law in the assembly. Most NGOs have welcomed the new piece of legislation and consider it more comprehensive than other NGO laws in the region.

Despite the protection of the new law, NGOs have experienced direct or implied pressure from government institutions. In most cases when an NGO criticizes the government in public, authorities react by pressuring and intimidating the NGO in various ways. In several instances, tax officials have checked NGO tax records that were up to five years old. The Tax Administration of Kosovo communicates not through official written requests, but through phone calls and other informal channels.

Legal advice for NGOs is available but limited. Although there are a large number of law firms, an extremely small number of lawyers have deep knowledge of the NGO legislation, especially concerning tax regulations for NGOs. Nevertheless, NGOs' demand for legal advice is low. It is unclear whether this is because NGOs do not need such advice, or because they do not have the ability to pay for it.

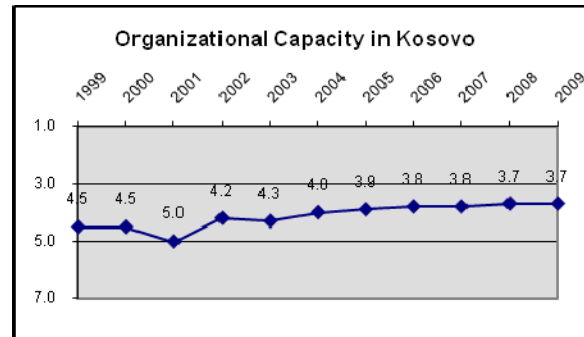
## ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 3.7

While NGOs showed slight improvement in involving citizens in their activities, this year technical advancement of NGOs slowed down.

Women's NGOs remain the organizations with the largest constituency base, but youth NGOs have started to build a considerable pool of activists. In fact, a trend of activism is developing among young people. Most of the volunteers that serve in the NGO sector are young. Nevertheless, citizens' participation rate in NGO activities is far from satisfactory. NGOs' lack of clear organizational profiles and missions might influence the low participation rate. NGO experts estimate that the number of NGOs which have clear missions and strategic plans is limited to around thirty. The rest of NGOs engage in activities that tackle issues which donors are funding. The disorganized state of most NGOs is primarily the result of bad management. Governing boards are often nonfunctional. The phenomenon of people serving on several boards remains a worrisome tendency because it is virtually impossible to deal effectively with the large number of pressing issues affecting several organizations at the same time.

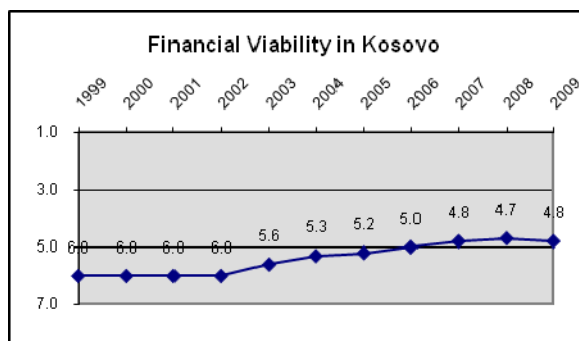
During 2009, a number of partnerships and coalitions started or continued their work. The

coalition Democracy in Action gathered eleven NGOs from around Kosovo to monitor the local elections in November. The Kosova Women's Network continued its work in empowering women and disadvantaged groups and has more than eighty member organizations across Kosovo. A few other NGOs have been in talks about future cooperation and partnership.



Compared to 2008, technical advancement has slowed down. Although NGOs have access to basic office equipment, Internet, phone, and fax, the technology they use is often outdated. The number of donors that fund the purchase of equipment is extremely small. NGOs are usually given old equipment from donors' offices when donors update their own equipment.

## FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 4.8



Financial viability suffered to some extent in 2009, mostly due to a further decrease in donor presence on the ground. The withdrawal of a major donor like the Olof Palme International

Center left a considerable number of NGOs unprepared. Most international donors decreased the amount of funding available for their activities in Kosovo. For example, the Swedish International Development Agency drastically reduced its funding.

NGOs continued to look for diverse funding sources for their projects and a considerable number of active NGOs appear to understand the importance of funding diversification. NGOs that have relied on one primary donor experienced great difficulties after several key donors cut funding or completed their activities

in Kosovo. The reduced number of donors meant that NGOs had less choice in funders. Most grant money that NGOs receive comes from international donors. Local support is feeble and often limited to nonmonetary donations. Central and local governments provide in-kind support for the activities of NGOs through the provision of services or event venues. The private sector has started to offer its support through nascent philanthropy initiatives. A few corporations have dedicated parts of their budget to public benefit initiatives.

NGOs are attempting to build lasting relationships with donors and other financial

supporters. The most active NGOs that have enjoyed visible success from past projects have managed to build a loyal base of financial supporters. Unfortunately, these NGOs are still a minority in the sector.

Intensive contact with donors, especially international donors, has helped NGOs develop good financial management systems. Detailed financial management records and independent financial audits have become the norm in the sector, and are also prerequisites for receiving donor funding.

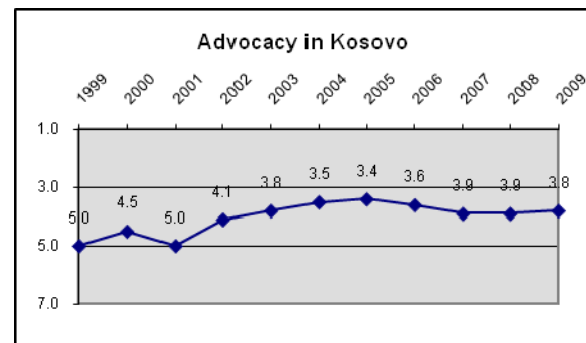
### ADVOCACY: 3.8

Advocacy initiatives increased during 2009. NGOs created several issue-based advocacy coalitions and attempted to influence policymaking processes—and at times succeeded. Lobbying at the local level, although less visible than initiatives aimed at the central government, was more intensive and more successful. At both levels NGOs used direct lines of communication, although often these were informal, such as prominent civil society figures reaching policymakers through personal ties.

Overall, there was more consultation between NGOs and the government compared to 2008. Every strategy and law requires feedback from civil society, and NGOs have become more aware of the importance of contributing to policymaking processes. The results are not always tangible, however, because NGOs' opinions are not always taken into consideration, and their role remains strictly advisory. NGOs point to the lack of legal mechanisms guaranteeing civil society's contribution to the policymaking process.

An initiative worth mentioning is the Consortium for Strengthening of Civil Society Advocacy initiated by Kosova Democratic Institute (KDI) and Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN). The consortium monitors the Kosovo Assembly and notifies NGOs about advocacy opportunities.

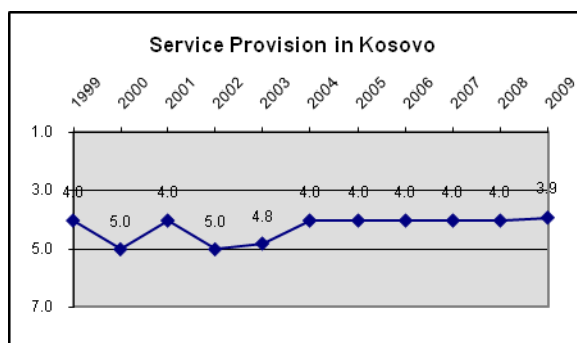
The civic initiative FOL '08 formed an ad-hoc coalition focused on the increase in electricity tariffs. More than 10,500 citizens signed a petition but the coalition did not succeed in putting the issue on the legislative agenda. Other NGO advocacy and lobbying initiatives focused on access to government documents.



The Association of Kosovo Meat Producers and Processors and the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce conducted advocacy on primary and secondary legislation about the import of meat after the government issued an administrative direction containing a provision that reserved for international companies the exclusive right to import meat. According to the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce, the direction created a monopoly in the meat market. Under pressure from interest groups and the media, the government agreed to change the provision so that it included Kosovo companies as well.

### SERVICE PROVISION: 3.9

The line of NGO products and services has increased in range and specialization. An overwhelming number of NGOs at the national and local levels offer products and services in areas such as governance, accountability, economic development, and human rights. One example is the consultancy services provided by NGOs to the government, such as GAP Institute's participation in the functional review exercise sponsored by DFID in preparation for the public administration reform that is expected to commence during 2010. Local NGOs also provide more tangible products and services including legal assistance, shelter, relief, and health care, reflecting the immediate needs of their constituencies.



Most NGO services, especially research, studies, publications, and trainings, are made available to a broader constituency than NGOs' own memberships. NGOs market these products through the media, the Internet, newsletters, and ever-growing social media networks.

Government structures—mostly at the local level—have started to cooperate with local NGOs in the provision of social services for vulnerable groups such as children, single mothers, and trafficking victims. NGOs specialized in dealing with disadvantaged groups and which operate services such as shelters and orphanages, such as Handikos and SOS Kinderdorf, form the core group of NGOs benefiting from government funding.

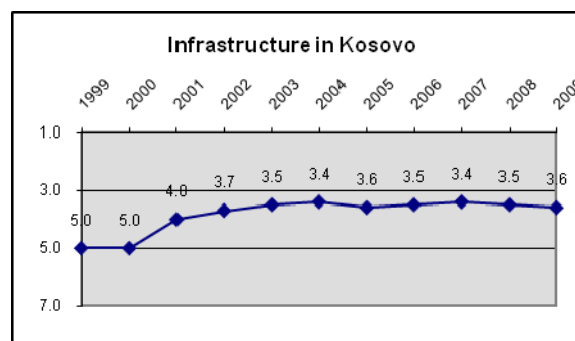
The rate of cost recovery from the provision of services and products remains low. Although NGOs have expanded their services, they have little knowledge of the ability of beneficiaries to pay for their products. Even sought-after NGO products and services are still being provided for free. NGOs recover costs to some extent by charging application fees and at times charging for access to publications.

### INFRASTRUCTURE: 3.6

The infrastructure for NGOs deteriorated in 2009. The only NGO resource center in Pristina, ATRC, was almost inactive except for issuing a newsletter of calls for proposals. CiviKos, an open forum for all civil society organizations in Kosovo, was also inactive due to changes in leadership. A few smaller resource centers are open in other towns, but they are not proactive about engaging with NGOs in their areas.

Trainings have decreased in number because of the inactivity of the two main NGO resource centers. As a consequence, there was less training in local languages, especially in Serbian. Currently, only one NGO center operates in the Serbian-populated enclaves, while a new network of minority NGOs is in the process of formation. A growing number of

private companies are offering trainings in areas of interest for NGOs across Kosovo.



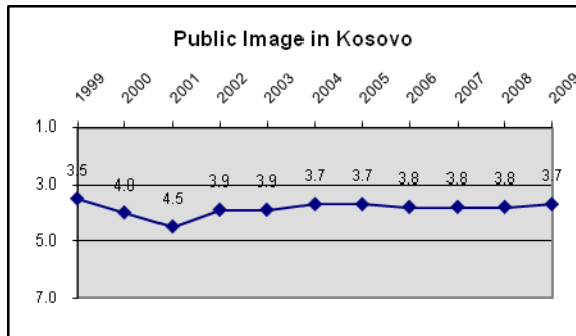
NGOs can apply for funds from several local grantmaking organizations: ATRC, Center for Civil Society Development, Kosovo Civil Society Foundation, Kosovo Foundation for

Open Society, Forum for Civic Initiatives, and Foundation for Democratic Initiatives, among others.

Communication between NGOs in Kosovo is not well coordinated and tends to be ad hoc, depending on the needs of individual

organizations. Networks of NGOs that work on common issues are rare. The Kosova Women’s Network is a rare exception to the trend of casual information sharing between NGOs. This network has formal channels of communication that include regular meetings, mailing lists, and a newsletter.

**PUBLIC IMAGE: 3.7**



Throughout 2009, NGOs enjoyed an improved public image. There was more coverage of their activities, and they became more media-savvy. This positive trend applied mostly to Pristina-based NGOs, however; NGOs located in the enclaves did not experience much improvement.

Compared to 2008 when Kosovo’s independence declaration eclipsed almost everything else in the media, NGOs found it easier to attract media attention. In 2009 NGOs had to share the media’s attention with the local elections campaign, but they started holding events during the weekend, which helped ensure media coverage. NGOs have started using inexpensive new media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

National media, having a wider range of issues to pick from, covered NGOs less than the local media. Nevertheless, both national and local media supported NGOs’ PR campaigns by airing ads and public service announcements for free. One of the major successes in terms of media coverage was BIRN’s facilitation of debates between mayoral candidates in all municipalities, which aired during prime time on the national public broadcaster, RTK.

At the same time, the media continued to frame events using a superficial and sensationalistic approach, without focusing on substantive issues. In other instances, the media ignored NGO activities or engaged in self-censorship to protect the interests of certain influential groups or persons.

The public had a relatively positive perception of the NGO sector. Humanitarian NGOs and those working with women and young people remain the most popular. NGOs working in advocacy or political activism are seen with skepticism, and are sometimes accused of treason or money laundering. The government shares this negative perception, seeing NGOs as noisy and unrestrained.